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Letter dated 3 September 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the memorandum of the Government of Mongolia on Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status, issued on 1 September 1999 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, under item 76 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Jargalsaikhany ENKHSAIKHAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Memorandum of the Government of Mongolia on Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status

This century has witnessed tremendous leaps in science and technology that hold the promise of accelerating social progress and creating new wealth for the benefit of humankind. These achievements raise the hopes of the international community to live in a better and safer world. At the threshold of the twenty-first century humankind is faced with various challenges of a global nature requiring global solutions, which can only be achieved through the collective efforts of the entire world community. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear proliferation, still poses a threat to international peace and security. The strengthening of the international non-proliferation regime and making a resolute turn towards effective disarmament, especially in the field of nuclear disarmament, remains one of the challenges facing the world.

Mongolia believes that all States are called upon, individually or collectively, to contribute to the strengthening of international peace and security, promoting general and complete disarmament. Therefore it fully supports the efforts of States, international organizations and civic movements aimed at reducing and removing the threats to international peace and security, taking preventive measures, conducting constructive dialogue and developing friendly relations and cooperation among nations. On its part, Mongolia also strives to actively promote regional dialogue and cooperation in different fields, including in strengthening peace and security. It is in this spirit, in 1998 Mongolia joined the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum and supports the efforts to develop a regional security arrangement in north-east Asia.

Among the global efforts to strengthen nuclear security and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, Mongolia attaches particular importance to the role played by the non-nuclear States in enhancing global and regional peace and security by establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world. At present these nuclear-weapon-free zones cover more than 50 per cent of the Earth's land mass and contribute to the goal of strengthening nuclear security and non-proliferation.

The Mongolian Government believes that nuclear-weapon-free zones, which at present embrace 107 States, are called upon to play an important role in curbing the spread of nuclear weapons and should therefore remain as a priority goal of the international community in the field of disarmament, as humankind enters the twenty-first century. Therefore Mongolia supports establishing new zones, as reflected in the Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Mongolia not only strongly supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world, but, given its unique geographical location and historical experience, strives to make its concrete practical

contribution, however modest, to this noble cause. Mongolia is located between two nuclear-weapon States that share thousands of miles of common border with each other, as well as with Mongolia, and have, in the past, conducted nuclear tests in Mongolia's vicinity.

Guided by the desire to contribute, in its own way, to the cause of nuclear non-proliferation, and in line with its foreign policy aimed at contributing to regional peace and security, as well as ensuring the country's national security by political and diplomatic means, in 1992, Mongolia declared its territory a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Since then it has undertaken intensive consultations with the States concerned, especially the five nuclear-weapon States, to materialize its initiative. The initiative was welcomed and supported by the nuclear-weapon States. Also, many other States and the entire Movement of Non-Aligned States welcomed Mongolia's initiative. The latter expressed its full support for Mongolia's policy to institutionalize its nuclear-weapon-free status.

The first stage of the above consultations and negotiations culminated in the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly, on 4 December 1998, of the consensus resolution 53/77 D, entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status".

The resolution welcomed Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status and invited Member States, including the five nuclear-weapon States, to cooperate with Mongolia in taking the necessary measures to consolidate and strengthen its international security and nuclear-weapon-free status. It also requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations and relevant United Nations bodies to provide assistance to Mongolia to take the necessary measures mentioned in the resolution.

Mongolia's initiative reflects a novel approach towards the concept and practice of establishing nuclear-weapon-free areas, bearing in mind the specifics of the case involved. Mongolia's unique location enables it to take equally unique approach to the question of creating non-traditional nuclear-weapon-free areas. Thus the question of the nuclear-weapon-free status is addressed in tandem with Mongolia's overall external security concerns and needs, including its economic and ecological needs arising out of its landlocked location and fragile ecosystem.

The consultations have also demonstrated that, since the approach is a novel one, it requires careful examination and needs to address the legitimate interests of all the States concerned. Mongolia is prepared to address these interests.

Inspired by the international community's support for its initiative and committed to institutionalizing the nuclear-weapon-free status, Mongolia is taking steps this fall to enact national legislation defining and regulating its nuclear-weapon-free status based on the existing and evolving practice and reflecting its unique situation.

The Government of Mongolia is consulting with the States concerned, especially the five nuclear-weapon States, on the ways and means of implementing

General Assembly resolution 53/77 D, namely defining the country's nuclear-weapon-free status as well as addressing its international security needs and interests. Thus, since the adoption of the General Assembly resolution, two rounds of expert level consultations have been held with the representatives of the nuclear-weapon States.

Mongolia believes that its nuclear-weapon-free status, once defined, should enjoy the same international status as the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and that, taken together with the measures to strengthen its external security, it could form a separate international regime.

Mongolia is committed to working together with the countries concerned in defining its nuclear-weapon-free status and identifying the country's international security needs, the areas of possible bilateral, trilateral and regional cooperation as well as the role of the United Nations and regional arrangements. The regional disarmament meeting held from 3 to 5 August 1999 in Ulaanbaatar, under the auspices of the Mongolian Government and the United Nations, examined, inter alia, questions pertaining to Mongolia's external security needs and its nuclear-weapon-free status and generated many constructive ideas. During this meeting, all States concerned reiterated their resolve to work with Mongolia in this question.

The Government of Mongolia expresses its deep conviction that the implementation of resolution 53/77 D, as well as identification and respect for the country's clearly defined nuclear-weapon-free status, would contribute to enhancing predictability and stability, as well as to confidence-building, not only in the north-east Asian region, but also in the Asia-Pacific region in general. The Government believes that the international community will continue to extend its valuable support and cooperation to Mongolia's policy of promoting the goals of non-proliferation and strengthening its international security.